

"Makings of Memory: Writings of Remembrance and Oblivion"

CRW 2930

Building 9-Fred Schultz Hall; Room 1411

Mon. and Wed., 3:00-4:15 PM

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"Your perception, however instantaneous, consists ... in an incalculable multitude of remembered elements; in truth, every perception is already a memory. Practically, we perceive only the past, the pure present being the invisible progress of the past gnawing into the future."

— Henri Bergson (French philosopher), from *Matter and Memory*

What is it that memory has to tell us, to reveal to us, about the world, about ourselves? In this class, we will read, view and discuss a variety of different types of materials, of "memory texts," all of them united in their focus upon memory and imagination, the shaping of a life as it is seen through the "rearview mirror." The many brilliant materials for this class will be intended as starting-off points for your careful reflection, our wide-ranging discussions and, then, your own engaged writing, always moving us toward a more fruitful examination of our own memories and imagination.

How are memories made, and to what end? What does it, as Wittgenstein said, "feel like to remember"? How are memories written, filmed and photographed (and, in the process, fabricated, lied about), and for what purpose? What is the role of memory (and forgetfulness), truth and self-deception, in the creation and sustaining of identity...of who we think we are? And what happens to that identity when memories falter or fail, as we recognize that which "memory cannot contain..." as we, as Shakespeare counseled, "Commit to these waste blanks"?

Required Texts:

1. Joe Brainard: *I Remember*. Publisher: Granary Books; ISBN-10: 1887123482
1. *Nox*, by Anne Carson. Publisher: New Directions; ISBN-10: 0811218708
2. *My Life*, by Lyn Hejinian. Publisher: Wesleyan; ISBN: 9780819573513.
3. *Krapp's Last Tape and Other Dramatic Pieces*, Samuel Beckett, Publisher: Grove Press; ISBN: 0802144411
4. *Building Stories*, by Chris Ware. Publisher: Pantheon; ISBN-10: 0375424334
5. *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination*, by Annette Kuhn, Publisher: Verso; ISBN: 1859844065

Recommended Text:

1. *Here*, by Richard McGuire. Publisher: Pantheon; ISBN: 0375406506